# The News of the

# SWAMP FOX CONTEST GROUP

Editor: Scott Brown, N2OG
February 2022

## Presidents Corner

Just a reminder that it's time to pay club dues (if you have not already done so).
Individual membership: $10
Family membership: $10
Student membership: No dues

## My interview with new member, Vicki Carnes, W4NQX
By N2OG Scott

As it happens with many of our prospective members we hear of them first, on the air, in a contest. When an operator gives SC in their exchange we as members perk up, make note of the call sign then circle back to them after the contest.

When I checked her call sign in QRZ I was Amazed at the speed at which Vicki has advanced in the hobby. Newly licensed, March 3, 2021 she was a net Control operator by the end of that month! Vicki then went on to pass her General exam on April 17,2021. Vicki already has 4008 contacts in her QRZ log!

Vicki has taken to POTA with a passion and has several awards in the program, including WAS in POTA. I am still missing HI, NV and AK! for my POTA WAS. What a hunter she is! And that's a big endorsement of her station!

And if that is not enough, Vicki has completed her CW OPS beginner class last year.  I am still on the waiting list to get into a CW OPS class:(

Vicki has a Yeasu FT-891 and uses a ZS6BKW multi band antenna for HF.  Vicki says HF is Awesome.  Vicki is a member of the York County Amateur Radio Society. Vicki was recently awarded, Pacesetter Award, (Ham Operator of the Year) by her club in her first year.

With all of her accomplishments, I knew you would be interested to know more about her so I reached out and asked for a interview for our newsletter.  Here is what Vicki had to say;

I asked Vicki how she learned about ham radio.  Vicki said, many years ago she had a CB and really enjoyed talking on the radio during her long drives.

Years later Vicki was becoming disenchanted with social media, news organizations and there censorship of voices and ideas.  Vicki thought she would like to hear what was being said “unfiltered” so to speak.

Vicki reached out to York County Amateur Radio Society.  Vicki was taken under wing and man she has learned to Fly!  As you can tell.

The one word I would use to describe Vicki is, ENERGY.  Vicki is proud to say she is a 70 year grandmother., She said she is willing to try anything and not afraid to make a couple mistakes along the way. She is having fun and maybe she can inspire someone else to try something new on the air. She is trying to 'lead by example'  she says.

Recently Vicki and another new YCAR member participated in Winter Field Day from a Ice fishing tent in 18 degree weather!  She is now mentoring another ham teaching him POTA.

Vicki has goals! Vicki plans on getting her Extra ticket ASAP, she said

she does not like to be excluded. She is hard at work learning CW and wants to be voted in as a Lifetime member of CWOPS. No doubt she will.  Please give Vicki a warm welcome!

Please welcome George N4QI to the Swamp Fox Contest Group! George was first licensed as a Novice in 1960 but took a 57 year hiatus and rejoined the hobby in 2018 as a General and upgraded to Extra in early 2020. George lives in a HOA restricted community in Myrtle Beach and uses a vertical MFJ loop in the attic of his garage for 30 and 40m and a wire loop strung around the ceiling of a 2nd floor bedroom for 20,17,15 and 10m (with a tuner) to an Icom 7300. He enjoys SSB, CW and RTTY contesting but often focuses on CW and RTTY. George states on his QRZ.com page that he enjoys contesting, DX and now that he's semi-retired; some rag chewing. He's operated in CQ WPX, CQWWDX, IARU HF, ARRL DX and NAQP's and his 3830 results show that George has been very active in state QSO parties and most recently in the NAQP SSB and Winter Field Day events! George is presently a N3FJP logger user and this year's goals are to explore other contest logging options (I see an opportunity to introduce him to N1MM+!), improve his CW skills and get into FT4/FT8 which will be a totally new experience for him.
George: Welcome to the Swamp Fox Contest Group!

I told you our club was going to grow.  At this rate we will have 24 new members by the end of the year!

An introduction to Weak Signal Propagation Reporter Network
By N2OG Scott

I want to show you a way for you to improve your station using “WSPRnet”.  And it is our clubs starting point to improve our contest scores.

WSPR implements a protocol designed for probing potential propagation paths with low-power transmissions. WSPR's normal transmissions carry a station's call sign, Maidenhead grid locator, and transmitter power in dBm. The program can decode signals with S/N as low as -28 dB in a 2500 Hz bandwidth. Stations with internet access can automatically upload their reception reports to a central database called WSPRnet, which includes a mapping facility. To see a live version of the map pictured at top right, click here.

WSJT-X, if you don't know is the program we use to generate digital signals which can be decoded by listening stations around the world. WSJT-X now includes WSPR among its many supported modes. Most operators will be best served by using*WSJT-X* for WSPR as well as many other digital two-way communication modes including FT8.

When I was a new general I used this exact program to help me attempt improvements to my antenna and actually see if indeed improvements were actually made. WSPR has a feature where the program can band hop after a few transmissions. This is useful for your multi-band antennas. The band hopping feature can be adjusted to specific bands you want to look at. You can also turn off this feature to watch a single band antenna.

It is important as cycle 25 progresses we continuously monitor propagation conditions. If we anticipate an opening is coming we can be ready for a Mult and get them before the pile up begins. And if we have a live chat room active, like other clubs do, we will have a better chance of finding that mult sooner and everyone getting them.

This is one of the most used programs in the ham radio world. You will be able to find online help for your particular radio installation. Plus our members are available to help if necessary.

Once we get several members able to use the program I would like to create a rotating schedule for running WSPR from your station and posting the results in the club propagation page. We can also run our own contests to see who is reaching out the furthest.

# Propagation Propagation Propagation
By N2OG Scott

Hello, Since I am unable to get on the air regularly I am content writing for you, hopefully informing you and exciting you to explore your hobby.

I am reading almost everything that comes across my inbox and digging deeper into it's content. Paul Cook, K7RA writes a propagation report for the ARRL as you probably know. I wanted to know a little about his background and how he came to write a column. I found nothing surprising but a inquisitive mind from a very young age.

What I did find useful is that last year K7RA put a 10M beacon on the air. In his Words “I put a coordinated 10 meter propagation beacon on the air on July 9, 2021 after several days of testing. Frequency is 28.2833 MHz, assigned by the IARU and the call sign is K7RA/B. The beacon was built by Volodymyr Skrypnyk, UY5DJ/AA7DJ and runs 11 watts into a vertical half wave dipole. Paul Cook goes on to say when you hear his beacon email him with a report. In Italy, QRP beacon network transmitting at 28.322 MHz managed by IK1ZYW. I can't confirm this one is on the air, time will tell.

## Beacons by Nigel Peacock G4KIU

The largest fully coordinated single beacon system, is the International Beacon Project (IBP). The North California DX Foundation (NCDXF) and the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) co-ordinate and operate a series of amateur radio beacons across the world.

These beacons are used by both ham radio operators and commercial

bodies to assess the likelihood of being able to make a contact from a home location to a different part of the world.

The project was launched in 1979. At present, there are 18 such stations spread to all corners of the globe, which have been operating as a beacon network since 1995.

What makes this beacon project unique, is that each station takes a turn to transmit on the assigned frequency and then makes way for the next in the chain. This means that, for instance, listening to the full sequence of 18 beacons on 14.100 MHz, will indicate where it may be possible in the word to make a contact at that moment.

As a beacon come to the end of its first ten-second sequence, it moves a band higher. For instance, when ZL6B in South Africa completes ten seconds on 14.100MHz, it moves immediately to 18.110MHz for its next transmission. Then to 21.150MHz, 24.930MHZ and finally to 28.200MHz. At that point, ZL6B stops transmitting. With a ham rig set up to change spot frequencies quickly, and an accurate clock, it is possible to track ZL6B though the five bands and discover which frequencies are open for potential contacts.

An operator at home listening won't hear all 18 one after the other but may copy several during the sequence.  Each station starts its transmission sequence with the call-sign sent at 22 words a minute. This is followed by four dashes. The first dash is send using 100 watts, the next at 10 watts, then one watt and finally 100 milliwatts. The whole process takes ten seconds, then the next station in the sequence starts transmitting on that frequency and so on around all 18 across the world.

The reduction in transmitter power for the four dashes gives the listener an indication of band conditions. For instance, hearing the 100 watt and 10-watt signals, but not the lower two power tones, could mean that you may not be able to have contacts with stations themselves using low power or have a less efficient antenna system and poorer location that the beacon. If you can hear the final 100 milliwatts signal, that that means the band is wide-open to that region of the world.

The sequence for each individual stations transmits for exactly ten seconds and then it will stop to let the next station to begin.

You may not be able to read Morse at 22 words a minute, but there is another way to know which beacon you are hearing. Each beacon is on a set 10-second schedule, so with an accurate clock and a list, you should be able to identify which stations you can hear.

Where are the ham radio HF International beacons located?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| United Nations | 4U1UN | New York City |
| Canada | VE8AT | Eureka, Nunavut |
| United States | W6WX | Mt. Umunhum |
| Hawaii | KH6RS | Maui |
| New Zealand | ZL6B | Masterton |
| Australia | VK6RPB | Rolystone |
| Japan | JA2IGY | Mt. Asama |
| Russia | RR9O | Novosibirsk |
| Hong Kong | VR2B | Hong Kong |
| Sri Lanka | 4S7B | Colombo |
| South Africa | ZS6DN | Pretoria |
| Kenya | 5Z4B | Kariobangi |
| Israel | 4X6TU | Tel Aviv |
| Finland | OH2B | Lohja |
| Madeira | CS3B | São Jorge |
| Argentina | LU4AA | Buenos Aires |
| Peru | OA4B | Lima |
| Venezuela | YV5B | Caracas |

**What Frequencies are Used by the International Beacon Project?**

20m 14.100 MHz
17m 18.110 MHz
15m 21.150 MHz
12m 24.930 MHz
10m 28.200 MHz

I will add these beacon to my radio's memory bank and check it and other beacons that may be important to us. And I am asking you to create a memory group of your favorite beacons to check on a regular basis. And those of you who are listening to beacons on a regular basis, start letting club member know when you are hearing them.

When one station hears a beacon and you can't, you got to ask yourself why? It might be in an important direction you need to be able to hear. The difference between you and the operator ahead of you may be he finds a way to hear that far away beacon!

From the Reflector -Words of Wisdom-

From the book, "**KABLOONA**," by Gontran de Poncins, 1941, page 21…
The radio op "had accomplished marvels with his toy, feats proper to rouse the jealousy of a power station. For the ether is like a woman: it is not enough to have instruments of price and power: you must amuse it, cajole it, invoke it in your dreams. Anyone who has seen an amateur radio-operator retire to a corner of a room and dream for hours with that shy preoccupied air they all have, knows how true this is. Living in the solitude of a dimly lit shack, he had prayed to the goddess of the radio tenderly and with respect, and she had come to him and stayed with him. Elsewhere she had come and fled, or had not come at all; but she had never deserted this operator. Thus the op had grown famous, and it was to him that the whole of the world had sent forth its appeals. With his sensitive hands- there are hands in the world that confer grace, and he had them- the radio-op would rescue messages that were dying in the air; he would revive them and relay them on to their destination."
Fred KT5X

Interesting thread on N1MM groups.io with tips about using a mouse. These stuck out from Kevan N4XL.

General:

- Programmable buttons on mouse
    - K4XL: For you mouse aficionados, don't overlook the fact

that the buttons on your mouse may be programmable. One button on my mouse, for example, is programmed to send ESC.  This keeps my left hand free to hold my coffee cup.
    - N7US: I have one programmed to the “=” key to repeat the last transmission.
- RTTY (and maybe other digital?)
    - VE3KI - Make sure ESM is on, and select the "Setup > Rt-click = Return NOT Menu" option in the DI window.
        - Run mode: Right-click anywhere in the received text area of the DI window to send your CQ. When someone responds, left-click on their callsign then right-click to send your exchange. Wait for the received exchange, left-click on it, then right-click to send your TU message. Five mouse clicks.
        - S&P mode: Find a station calling CQ. Right-click anywhere in the received text area to send your callsign and left-click to transfer the callsign to the Entry window. Wait for the exchange, left-click on it, then right-click to send your exchange and log the contact. Four mouse clicks. Use the other hand to turn the tuning knob, or use a hot-key to jump to the next signal on the Spectrum Display window, or in the Bandmap window if you are in Assisted/Unlimited class.
        - Sometimes you need to send something other than the next ESM message. Program the buttons at the bottom of the DI window with the messages you are most likely

to need and use the mouse to send one of them when needed. Occasionally you may need to use the spacebar or the Esc key, or maybe an up/down arrow key for fine tuning/RIT, but most of the time you can forget about the keyboard.

- F4DSK
    - I don't know how you (or anyone else) type on the keyboard quicker than a single mouse click (your hand must be always on the mouse, read below).
      You hear the diddles and you know that you will have to click so you have enough time to put the mouse's cursor in the right place (you know where it will appears on the DI). One left click will put the call/RPT on the entry windows (it tooks half a second...)
      Then use the ESM feature : https://n1mmwp.hamdocs.com/setup/function-keys/#esm-enter-sends-message combined with the "Right Click = Return NOT menu” option : https://n1mmwp.hamdocs.com/manual-operating/digital-modes/#the-rate-improver-right-click-return-not-menu and it will take another half second with a right click to send the next macro ?
      I'm doing SO2R this way and have the right hand 99% of the time on the mouse (the remaining 1% is to rubbing my eyes after 24 hours on air non-stop ?) . The left hand is to hit ESC (if needed) or to hit a rare keyboard shortcuts (dual CQ , swap radio frequency or any other particular functions). I type the callsign,

directly, only when my brain recognizes a badly decoded callsign (therefore not "clickable" - it's my personal master.brain file ?).

I have had this issue, the same as Burton.  See Kevan's fix below.

Burton hinted at having problems in the NAQP CW due to delayed sending in his macros. Said he felt he was losing Q's because others beat him to the punch. The same happens in SSB.

I have a new headset with a different microphone so am sitting down to record my audio wav files for Saturday. I'll be feeding it into Audacity before saving them. Will use it to level the volume of the different messages so they are all consistent with each other. Will also remove the few tenths of a second silent periods at the beginning and end of the recordings. Then I can count on the rig to instantly start transmitting my call when I hit the F-Key while doing S&P. That also keeps the rig from hanging in TX mode for a bit after the audio is done. Experience tells me Burton is right. Delays do cost you Q's.

Don't forget to follow Bill's, N4IQ, advice. Put {CLEARRIT} in your CQ and TU (and others as appropriate) F-key messages. I've left RIT on too many times and then later discovered I'm off frequency trying to bust the next pileup when S&P or have trouble hearing the next caller when running.

Kevan N4XL

Below is a golden learning moment from Kevan, N4XL

Mike KY4ID, you are right about having to fiddle with EZNEC. Another thing on my GetRoundToIt list. In the meantime, have you checked out the program HFTA? It should give you a feel for how raising your antenna up 20 ft might help. Done a presentation on that several

times. One can be found here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dE40GWnfJbU. I'm betting you will find that extra 20 feet on 40 meters will be worth the effort. Both for DX and Domestic contests. And even a very compromised 160 antenna can add a half dozen mults to your score.

You probably know this, but when looking at station improvements think about the end result, not each individual change. Even many old timers don't appreciate what a 1 dB improvement can do. They poo-poo such changes because it mostly means diddly-squat. They don't consider that a 3 dB signal improvement is a doubling in signal strength at the other end and a 3 dB change is easy to get in most stations. Scott mentioned 100w stations sounding like 500 watts. That's how they do it.

Here's a hypothetical… Make antenna changes to get 2 dB. Using LMR400 instead of RG8x or RG58 gives 1 dB. Each PL259 connection can add 0.5 dB at HF frequencies so making a single run from the shack to the antenna adds another 1 dB. (Note: dB loss of PL259's and coax is less on the low bands.) Learning to effectively use speech processing might give you 2 more dB. When first starting out I had asked some old timers about such changing such things individually. Most non-contester/non-DXer types said "Don't bother. It ain't worth it." But add all those changes up. That hypothetical situation gives a 6 dB overall improvement. That is an equivalent ERP of going from 100 to 400 watts. Plus, many changes help with received signal strength too which lets you hear more stations. "Ya' can't work 'em if ya can't hear 'em." Those same old timers would all have agreed 6 dB is a worthwhile change.

1 dB is recognized as being the weakest signal change that we can detect with our ears. Not often, but sometimes a single 1dB improvement in the station can make the difference between putting a q in the log or not. That happens when a signal is whisper quiet and right at the noise level. In CQWW that weak sig might be a double mult in the South Pacific. 160 meter ops know the value of 1 dB too.

Fighting to pull in weak signals is common on Top Band. For top ops with a lot of money and time it is, but It isn't worth it to me to make a station change for such a thin “maybe” on return of investment. I will only do it as part of a group of several changes or if it is easy and fairly inexpensive to do. Glad you two are getting something from my ramblings. Makes it worthwhile.

Kevan N4XL

This tenacity to learn and understand put Mike, KY4ID in first place in the four call area in the CW ROOKIE ROUND-UP after only month months of learning CW.  Now that's a Swamp Fox!!

There was lots of chatter leading up to NAQP CW!  That was super and that is what builds a strong club.  Way to go guys!!

Below is from Bill, N4IQ
Let's see, Kevan

On 20 and 15 and 10, I have pairs of 1.5 wave open loops that I switch. The pairs are oriented NE-SW and NW-SE .  They are bi-directional with deep nulls off the sides.  Almost all my antennas go to the remote switch relay boxes (two boxes, one for each TS590, five antennas on a box.)  As I rotate the switch controls clockwise or counter clock wise, I am going NE to NW, visa versa.  Not all those antennas were using the same directional logic, confusing, but I had gotten used to them.  So I made clockwise NW to NE for all of them.  I just had to move coax connectors around on the switch boxes and labels on the remote switch control.

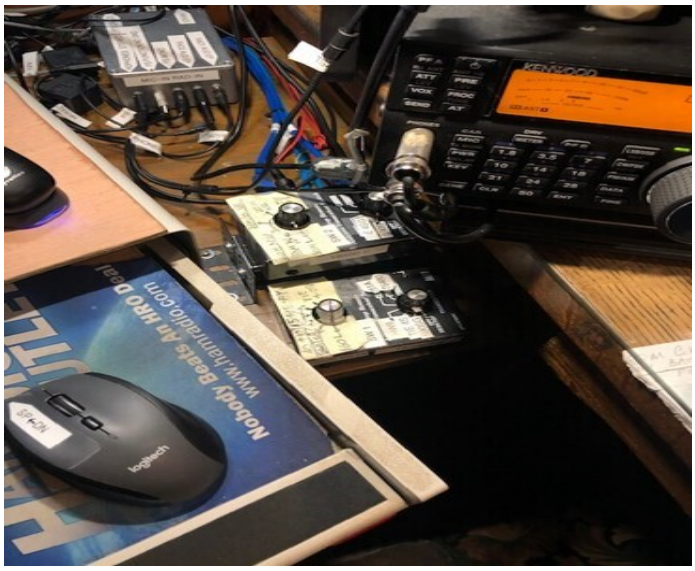
I have gotten so used to the way the switches operate, I hardly have to look at them when changing direction.

In a way, it is like deciding: do I use rotor control with stop at North or South, and which way do I turn the rotor to go from one to the other?

In my case, on 20 -15 -10M,  it is just a matter of instantaneous direction changing with switches.  Easy to optimize signals quickly. The directional properties of the vertically installed, horizontal polarized loops can be quite pronounced.

By the way, the switch boxes have tie connections that allow either TS590 to access antennas on the other switch box when DXing or casual operating.  The way they are tied, it is impossible to cross tie and burn up one of the 590s.

Here are some pixs:




Talk about complicated! Look at Bill N4IQ antenna controls.  I guess this is what it takes to be the #1 Swamp Fox.

Let's see what Gil KS4YX experienced during ARRL VHF contest.

I was able to squeeze in a few ARRL VHF Jan VHF contacts this past weekend. The snow storm killed my effort on Sunday and really hampered my overall score as I was unable to get on the air. I also

dedicated the majority of my time to the NAQP CW contest on Saturday. Both contest have conflicting times.

I had 10 digital contacts on 2, 6 and 440 using FT-8. I had two SSB contacts on 2 via FM. The 2 FM contacts were SOTA contacts with activators on a mountain near me.
Overall, my score was 12 contacts X 13 Mults = 91 points using a small 2M/440 beam antenna pointed North. (Mounted vertically but should have had it horizontally polarized). I ran a rip roaring 30 watts using my Yaesu FT-897d. With better preparation, I could have done a lot better, but snow storms have a way of hampering plans.
I have entered the score for this on the SF Web Page. DE KS4YX

**I pulled this off the NA SOTA reflector. It's all about CW ops. SOTA operators are known to be great CW ops so read on.**

**Can I ask a question about pileups? There are times when four or five stations are calling and I usually end up calling the op at the end because that's the call sign I can read (unless I hear S2S). I often find that other stations disappear rather than call again. Am I doing something wrong there?**
<<< many of you (who are learning the code) are advancing SO quickly, it just amazes me. NICE GOING! Procedures and circumstances, and propagation, boy, it is time in the saddle, no way around experience.

<<< to your question, you are not doing something wrong. Many times QRP activator is being heard very weakly, and because of this, sometimes the caller doesn't hear you well and makes mistakes calling when probably shouldn't, no need to assume it was intentional, sometimes the activator fades out entirely and the caller waits for signal to recover, or sometimes perhaps not.

((( the fading, QSB, is not always "conditions," propagation. It may be that the activator is set up on a steep mountain top and the antenna

thinks it is high, very high, maybe thousands of feet high. Even if the antenna wire is only fifteen feet off the ground, the cliff a few feet away means no ground reflection. In this case, if you model the antenna a thousand feet high, you find that there are very strong radiation angles and very deep nulls only a fraction of a degree apart such that if a signal arrival angle changes a tenth of a degree, signal goes from S-7 to zip… and back again after a little time.
back to your question: the best thing you can do if you have a bunch of callers at once is to work them as fast as you can until it thins down. If you take two minutes to complete a QSO with someone, while you were doing that five more stations will have responded to the spot!!!

I grew up in the 50's and the inexpensive radios I had were very wide open, I could hear signals two khz away. I am very well accustomed to hearing a lot of stations at once and still copying whichever one I want or maybe several at the same time, provided one isn't so loud as to "block" my rcvr, or they are essentially zerobeat, which is what Skip was speaking to. The more you do this, the more you will become able to focus your listening to the signal of your choice and concentrate out the interfering signals. Practice code speed IS part of it. Thinking back to my beginnings learning code, I can not imagine copying several stations at the same time. It was all I could do to interpret the code at all!

there are well known plateaus in learning code…

- 10 wpm, known as short term look-up table. This is why the old general code speed was 13wpm. To copy that fast you had to have moved code into long term memory, but it is still a look-up table
- 18 wpm, above this speed code has moved into the language area of the mind, BUT, you are hearing someone spell out stuff to you. (Hence the Extra code test speed of 20 wpm). Course, copying calls in a "pile-up" is exactly this. Today's teaching techniques are designed to put you here quickly and usually do so.

- 26 wpm, beyond this speed you are (likely) hearing syllables, letters run together, and at last you are actually hearing the other station speak to you!  Once you cross this barrier you are really copying code and your speed can run on up quickly.  Put the pencil down, lean back, and enjoy.

It should be noted that a significant percentage of people can not learn code through no fault of their own and not because they didn't try hard enough.  It has to do with how a person perceives sound, for some, if the same tone is heard again within a time span of 100 milliseconds, the person does not perceive the two dits separately. Most can perceive separate dits until closer than about 22 ms (around 55 wpm).  Closer than this the dits blurr together, it is called the Haas Effect, a built-in echo suppressor.  A small percentage of people don't have the Haas Effect, and they can copy speeds approaching 100 wpm!

73 Fred KT5X / W5YA

Mike, KY4ID had a very insightful post new operators should read up on.

I've had my eye on the SCQP for a while and I've been trying to decide if I'm going to do CW or SSB. I spoke with someone outside the club recently, and they said that state QSO parties usually average around 18 wpm, which is my current comfortable limit. Thought that would apply to the NAQP, but not so much. This contest is fast, which was a challenge for me, but that can also be a good thing. I love the weekly SSTs, but they're only once a week, and I've been wanting to operate in a similar event more often. I've been considering wading into the CWTs with S&P only, so this gave me a taste of that.

Started on 10m and worked down as the day went on. I was S&P for probably 98%. I ran for a short time on one of the slower bands, but speed and rate are king in this contest, and I didn't want to bog people

down with a bunch of AGN's and ??'s. I ran assisted, and I'm glad they added that category this year because I might would have bailed otherwise. I did work a lot of OPs who weren't spotted. I'd give myself up to 3 rounds to copy the call before I'd look over at the decoder on the radio. I don't normally use one, but my head copy isn't there yet. My goal is to be at 25 wpm by the end of the year, and I'm working every day to try to get there. I was able to copy many of the calls (mainly the 1x2s and 2x1s), and just look over at the decoder for confirmation.  Of course, you have to copy the ones that are spotted as well, because there are times where the op has left and someone new has setup shop on that frequency, but that's easier to do.

My best hourly rate in the SSTs is 36. So my goal in this contest was to land in that neighborhood. 36/hr x 10 hrs = 360, so I came pretty close. Knowing that my rate is on the lower side relative to other ops, my other goal was to chase mults since they start over on every band. Other learnings -

- I got to know my XIT very well. I've used it before, but never this much
- The TS-590SG will also increase the speed of your macros when you change the keyer setting. I knew that, but didn't think to change it until about 2 hours in. That helped significantly. Before the change, there were several times where I'd send my call, and get to the end just in time to hear the other guy's state that he was sending to someone else. Lol. My rate got better after the change.
- Call history files are a helpful guide, but they're not the gospel. Some of the stuff in there is off. Names for one, which I know can change from contest to contest. But also states, which is a big one because that can make the difference between a mult or not. There were probably 5-10 times where the state that popped up was different than what the operator was sending. I don't know if they were operating at a different location, or if the original person got the QTH wrong. Probably mostly the former and maybe some of the latter. Net/net - I don't want to miss a

mult, but I also don't want to count a mult that I shouldn't and get on the naughty list.

•Mike is a terrible name for a contest where the name is part of the exchange. It might have been band conditions at times, and I also had some spacing built in in my macro (in anticipation of calling CQ at a slower speed) which may have thrown off the other op. But I had to resend my name a lot during this contest. I'm going to be someone else next time. Lol. Maybe it's just me, but I can copy John from a mile away, so maybe I'll use that. Or Bill.

•I also learned that where there is an abnormally long pause after sending that info, go ahead and send it again. I turned some impending AGN/name/state?'s into TU's later in the contest when I heard other folks doing that and followed suit.

•This contest reinforced the discussions we've had this week regarding antennas. I pressed the rig/tuner/ant into my first ever Qs on 160m, but they didn't like it and I didn't like doing it. Probably wasn't a good idea. No damage done, but I don't want to do it again, and I don't want to miss out on those mults the next time.

•There must be some kind of RF superhighway between here and Yemassee, because I worked K4FT 2-3 times just like the last contest. I saw N4IQ spotted, but couldn't hear him. I think it was on 20m, so that's to be expected I reckon.

Sorry for the long message. Probably more than anyone wanted to know. Haha. I had a ton of fun and learned a lot. This was the first contest I've participated in where I didn't want to stop when time was up.

Hope everyone else had fun too! Look forward to hearing how the SF's did in the VHF contest.

73,
Burton
KY4ID

Here is some good info and links to ome CW lessons, This from the Greer Amateur Radio Club.

In the journey beyond where I am now, an analogy occurred to me. Making CW Parks on the Air contacts as a "hunter" is a little like eating ice cream - fun and easy. I have been working 6 - 10 per day. But, you do not build much muscle that way. SOTA contacts as a "chaser" are more challenging because there are a lot fewer of them and the activators are usually QRP. You frequently have to dig them out of the noise. POTA and SOTA as an activator adds the challenge of working CW pile ups. These plus Field Day and contesting have predictable exchanges so they do not stretch one's "generalist" CW skills and head copy beyond call signs and the exchange format.

The input from Randy W8FN and Ariel NY4G tells me I need more than ice cream to advance. Practice, practice, practice, and ragchews. Sounds like meat, potatoes, and vegetables. Ice cream sounds better, but I get it. Did everyone catch Ariel's offer to participate in scheduled ragchews?

Eric KI4ABS commented about the 5 WPM requirement for a General in the 2004 era. I had to do that for my Novice in the late 60s and went on to pass the 13 WPM General back when it was a requirement. Eric also reminded me of the work being done by the Long Island CW Club. I can see myself joining that organization! Thanks Eric.

George W4BUW - I never heard of the timing relationships within the letter "V" before, or why it became a test signal. You mentioned the relationship between Beethoven's 5th symphony and the letter V. Another interesting factoid is that people with musical ability tend to learn CW faster - many have found the sound of CW musical. Totally agree with your commentary about the way one learned CW affecting head copy. Really bad teaching has plagued some hams from getting to higher speeds, like counting code elements or associating CW letters with mnemonics. I have managed to unlearn the few from my past, but still occasionally flash on "fascination"  for the letter F. And

yes, you know you are getting old when you quote "See Mack run" from your first grade reader!

Howard K1SBI - thanks for sharing how you learned CW. I was 7 years old when you went to the USCG Radioman School. Also appreciate the encouragement.

While this thread was about advancing beyond intermediate skill levels, I am sure there are folks in our club that would like to consider learning/relearning CW someday. One of our own from the Greer club, Melvyn Robinson KN4GB, was a Radio Officer in the British Navy. He has a full class series on the Gary Wise W4EEY YouTube channel. Beginner playlist: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZ_9BZQ8gpzjDCun2p6HdDDRthbMik5Tj, and intermediate level playlist: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZ_9BZQ8gpzgMJVu3baYZgZWj3_55jKVp. We also have two club members that are (or have been) instructors with the CWops CW Academy (mentioned by Randy W8FN earlier in the thread).

Our first report from Jim Matson, KN4OQD
In my first participation with the club, I comfortably occupied the cellar.

Worked S&P all day. I miss having Annie (KN4IVD) with that YL voice as a pileup breaker! First time with the online scoreboard. It is addictive. I put in an extra 2 hours or so over planned because I did not want to slip down even more.

Had fun.

| Band | QSOs | Mults | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| 80M | 60 | 22 | 53 |
| 40M | 9 | 7 | 8 |
| 20M | 42 | 19 | 37 |
| 10M | 2 | 2 | 2 |

Total 113 50 100

Total QSOs = 113 Total Mults = 50 Total
Score = 5,650
Approx 7 hours.

Jim Matson
KN4OQD

Below is for everyone From Kevan, N4XL

**N1MM tips from "Top features In N1MM Logger that you should be using, but aren't" by Tom Wagner, N1MM**

2. = (equal key) to resend a message - Will send the last message key (F1-F12) again. If the last message sent was theexchange, it will send that. If it was you dumping your call in a pileup, it will send your call. Easy!

7. Check partial - Guess! If you can touch-type, you should watch the check partial window for calls. Especially on SSB, you may be able to guess the station's callsign as you are speaking it. If you guess correctly, you have just shaved a few seconds off the QSO. If the rate is good, this will make a big difference.

8. Alt-D to delete a spot. It's annoying to come across the same wrong spot over & over. Use Alt-D to delete it. If you keep seeing the same wrong spot, or bad spots from the same spotter, use the blacklist functions (right click on the spot on the bandmap to access) to ban the spot or spotter.

Q. What do you call a spotted call frequency with nobody there?
A. Your new run frequency

11. Up/down arrow to tune the radio.

• Up Arrow - Tune radio down (down in freq, but UP the

bandmap) 100 Hz on SSB, 20 Hz on CW (adjustable in the configurer). K3, Flex, Orion, FT-1000MP, FT-890, FT-920, FT-990 and FT-1000 and all Kenwood radios

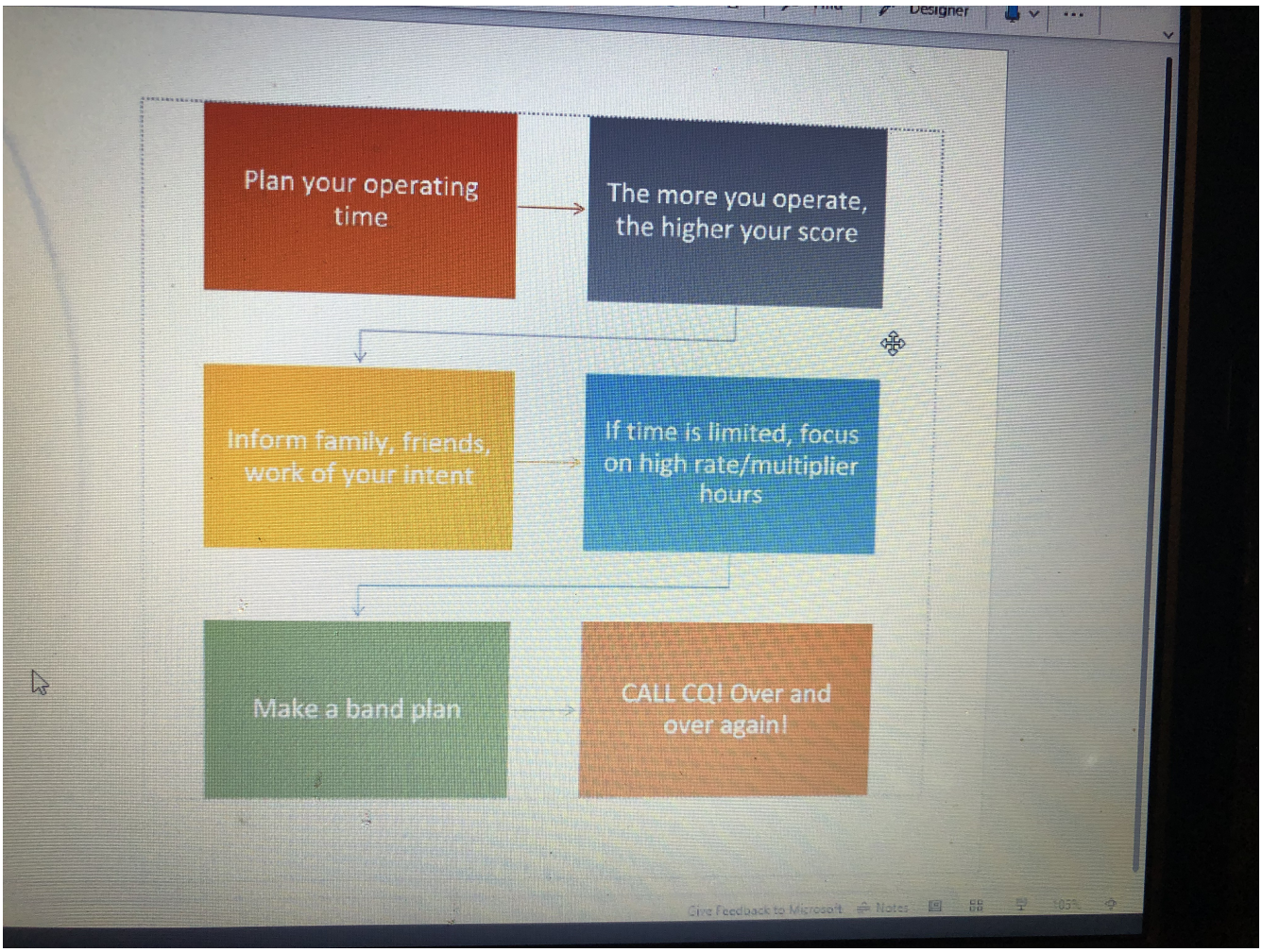
- o In S&P - pressing the up/down arrows will turn off RIT and tune your main VFO.
- o In Running mode - it will turn on your RIT and tune the RIT.

• Down Arrow - Tune radio up 100 Hz on SSB, 20 Hz on CW (adjustable). See Up Arrow information above

13. Ctrl+Q edit a spot - Quick Edit mode, go back one qso in the log. Enter logs and Escape discards the changes made. Press multiple times to go back multiple Qs. This is the preferred way to make quick edits during a contest.

16. CTRL+Shift+Up/Dn to work spots while running - Useful for single op, 2 VFOs (SO2V). Moves VFOB/Sub VFO to the next bandmap spot, skipping over the CQ frequency. Then use Pause to switch when the time is right to work the station.
17. These final three are videos about SDR technology.
18. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vh-G8o3DypuE&authuser=
19. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNOPVU6C4rA&authuser=0
20. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3BC7ALoi1M&authuser=0

Recently we were all invited to a ZOOM presentation put on by SECC . Myself and Kevan were the only two from our club in attendance. The subject was DX contesting. I am sorry to say you missed a great presentation. Below is a screen shot of where other clubs are and where we need to be as a club. Lets' Get With It!




This months contest

It seems so far this month that NAQP SSB is the big one. These Foxes are the early entrants;

NE4EA (Part-time)
AC4MC (Part-time)
N4IQ (Full-time)
KG9V
N4XL (Full-time)
K4FT (very Part-time)
KN4OQD (Part-time)
WB5NHL
K3DNE (Full-time)

WN4AFP (Part-time)
KG4IGC (Full-time)
WA2BCK (pending resolution of technical issues)
K4QQG
NU4E (depends on QRL)
At this point the space weather forecast looks promising. Lets see what happens. Give it your best!

Minnesota QSO Party February 5th

CQ WW RTTY WPX Contest February 12 – 13

Thank you all who participated in the NAQP CW. We had a good showing! Also a big thanks to everyone for already entering your scores into both 3830 and the NAQP websites. Here's our numbers:

Total Club 602,446

SFCG Code Breakers Team Score 529,338
K4FT 102,583
KY4ID 49,202
N4IQ 171,114
N4XL 179,091
WN4AFP 27,348

Palmetto Pulsars Score 24,282
K7OM 18,042
KG4IGC 6,240

Other SFCG Score 48,826
AC4MC 32,226
KS4YX 16,600

Great job!

And Finally a look at my past,


73 to All and have a great time on the Radio!

Signing off for now, Scott N2OG